

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
January 30, 2008; 4:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers**

**PRESENT**

Trena Carter  
Greg Lewis  
Ian Kohen  
Akua Ofori-Boateng  
Gil Palmer  
John Roberts  
Rosalind Pegram  
John Stroh

**ABSENT**

Tony McClendon  
Jay Myers  
Jason Staley

**\*\*\* Meeting Called to Order \*\*\***

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Secretary Lula Young

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Roberts called roll then requested any corrections or changes to the December Minutes.

**Commissioner Carter moved to accept the December 12, 2007 Minutes. Commissioner Ofori-Boateng seconded. Motion carried.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Ofori-Boateng reported as there was no budget activity in the month of January, the Donations balance remained at \$5,669.60.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:**

Chairperson Palmer shared information concerning the absence of the Director and Deputy Director due to illness.

**OPEN FORUM:**

Commissioner Roberts informed Commissioners that on Friday, February 1, he would be addressing a fourth and fifth grade class at Southside Elementary on the Civil Rights Era in the South and sharing his personal experience of the March on Washington, D.C. in 1963.

Commissioner Roberts also informed Commissioners of a new 'Transition to College' course that is being offered as a free class to anyone that may want to attend college and feels they lack the study skills or needs remediation in Math, English or Reading. This course is open to anyone and interested parties should contact Andrea Quick at McDowell for individualized instruction.

Commissioner Roberts announced that Ivy Tech had received a grant to work with Cummins' employees to improve cognitive skills and assist interested candidates in obtaining their MSSE Certification.

Commissioner Palmer congratulated Commissioner John Roberts on recently being awarded the President's Award for Excellence in Instruction at Ivy Tech Community College.

Commissioner Ofori-Boateng announced plans of the African, African-American Affinity Group to show the Commission's Oral History video for Black History Month and their desire to have a representative from the Commission to facilitate a discussion afterwards. Commissioner Roberts advised he would be available to facilitate two of the Mid-Range presentations if the two shifts hosted their presentations consecutively.

Staff secretary, Lula Young, announced the 'Freetown Village' performance being held at Central Middle School in celebration of Black History Month. Commissioners were also invited to attend the Mayor's State of the City address.

Commissioner Kohen announced the upcoming Dance Marathon to benefit Turning Point Domestic Violence Shelter. The dance will begin at 6pm Feb. 23 and end at 6am Feb. 24. Commissioner Kohen asked for volunteers to be chaperones during the student-led event.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

##### **Discussion of Policy for Funding Local projects from Donations Account**

Commissioners Lewis and Kohen advised that their recommendation of a maximum of \$500 be available for community funding contingent upon a \$5,000 reserve balance be maintained. The Commissioners also suggested additional funding could be made available if there was a surplus balance. Discussion ensued.

**Commissioner Stroh moved to table Agenda item 9 to allow the sub-committee more time to conduct their study. Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

##### **Discussion of Columbus Cultural Connection Website**

**Commissioner Roberts moved to table discussion of the Columbus Cultural Connection Website be tabled until the February meeting. Commissioner Carter seconded. Motion carried.**

#### **LIAISON UPDATE – MULTI-CULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE:**

Commissioner Ofori-Boateng reported that Ryan Hou, president of LHP has proposed to form the Columbus Area Ethnic Association (CAEA) which will be an umbrella association for families and various cultural groups. Commissioner Ofori-Boateng advised that the chair of the Mayor's committee who spoke to the Mayor about this was concerned that if this association comes to fruition it could essentially be the same thing as the Mayor's committee. Therefore, the Mayor's committee may be dissolved because the CAEA would have more pull from an international business standpoint.

Commissioner Ofori-Boateng advised that the Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee is revisiting their mission statement and plan to have a Q& A with the CAEA as they have learned that religion or sexual orientation would be covered by the Ethnic Association. Discussion ensued.

### **LIAISON UPDATES – GAY/STRAIGHT ALLIANCE:**

Commissioner Kohen advised he had attended the G/SA meeting. He went on to advise that the North High School club has eight (8) members and East High School does not have an active club as yet.

Commissioner Kohen shared concerns of Alliance members about a recent article printed in the Liberty Tree News about the Gay/Straight Alliance. Alliance members were discussing possible response/actions. Discussion ensued. Commissioners urged caution based on the right to freedom of speech.

Alliance members again voiced their thanks to the Commission for the change to the Rules and Regulation, December 2007. Members went on to request the support of the Commission with IN Equality Now.

### **LIAISON UPDATES – INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY COALITION:**

Commissioner Stroh announced that the ICC is co-sponsoring, with IUPUC, "Trevor", a movie about a young man coming to grips with his sexual orientation. The agenda of the Coalition is to educate the public, not to go beyond advocacy and education.

### **LIAISON UPDATE – INTERFAITH FORUM:**

Commissioner Lewis informed Commissioners that the IFFC met on Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>. The artist has determined that city hall is not structurally conducive to hanging the 'Illuminating Peace' fabric sculpture. In partnership with the Columbus Learning Center, the banners will be displayed at the Learning Center in March 2008. There will be other educational activities taking place that relate to youth. The next meeting of the Coalition will be February 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **LIAISON UPDATE – IMMIGRATION ISSUES GROUP:**

Commissioner Pegram reviewed the issues discussed at the last meeting. She advised that the Consul of Mexico attended an advisory meeting and explained how the local laws worked and what rights immigrants do have in this country.

### **ANNUAL DINNER – AD HOC :**

Commissioner Roberts advised that plans for the annual dinner are well under-way. The date for the dinner is Thursday, April 10, 2008 at the Holiday Inn. He advised that he will meet with John Harmon to set the time-table for printing the forty-five articles in The Republic Newspaper. Each article will highlight a specific accomplishment for each year the Commission has been in existence. Commissioner Carter announced that there will be five speakers this year for the dinner. The Honorable Lee Hamilton has been asked to provide a video of opening remarks which will be played at the dinner.

Commissioner Lewis was thanked for his support in ensuring delivery of the Essay/Art Contest packets throughout the school system. Commissioner Pegram was instrumental in developing the essay topic. The judging will be 5:30 p.m., March 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Meeting Hall.

Commissioner Roberts and Pegram volunteered to pick up any packets from the schools that requested a pick up.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Stroh seconded. Meeting adjourned.**